Lalit Narayan Mithila University

Kameshwarnagar , Darbhanga

Research Synopsis

Submit to the Faculty of Social Sciences,

University Department of Political Science,

(L. N. Mithila University, Darbhanga)

Title -

A Study On Dynamics Of Voting Behaviour Of Sultanganj Assembly Constituency in Bhagalpur District.

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SYNOPSIS

TITLE OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH WORK:

A Study On Dynamics Of Voting Behaviour Of Sultanganj Assembly Constituency in Bhagalpur District

Introduction:

Voting is undoubtedly the most important institution of political participation in a democratic society. It is one of those focal points of the democratic process when political activities reach a very high peak. In a modern democracy, election mechanism is the only legitimate device to aggregate popular preferences of the society organised politically, so as to lend a cloak of legitimacy to the formal decision-makers that knit up the political power structure based upon maximum consensus with minimum sacrifice of individual choice.

It may be noted here that voting behaviour is a complex process involving many factors. The role of ideology, myths, leadership, local issues and campaigning style are some of the factors that influence the voting behaviour. In India, this has been amply demonstrated in the various elections to the State Legislative Assemblies and in the elections to the Lok Sabha. The electoral systems are the practical instruments through which notions such as consent and representation are translated into political reality.

The term 'Voting Behaviour' is not new in the lexicon of modern political theory. It does not connote a mere compilation of voting statistics and computation of electoral shifts. It involves man's psychological process such as perception, emotion and motivation and relates it to political wisdom. The study of voting behaviour constitutes a very significant area of empirical investigation.

The founding fathers of the Constitution of India provided the right to vote to every citizen who is not less than 21 years of age (since reduced to 18

Uday Shankar Vidyarthi

years) and is not otherwise disqualified under any law on the grounds of non-residence, unsoundness of mind, crime or corrupt or illegal practice (Article 326). This provision has been hailed as the "fountain-spring of India's democracy". The Constituent Assembly adopted the principle of adult suffrage having faith on the common man. It was an expression of the belief in the equal level worth of all men and women.

India proudly describes itself as "the world's largest democracy". Democracy is a form of government in which everyone has a share. It is that form of government in which the mass of the population possess the right to share in the exercise of sovereign power. The electoral process and apparatus are basic to the design of a Constitution and quality of government in a democracy. The idea of the "sovereignty" of the people is reaffirmed in several places in the Constitution of India, especially in the chapters dealing with elections. The Constitution of India provides that the election of the House of People and Legislative Assembly of every State be on the basis of adult suffrage. This principle was adopted with faith in the common man.

India has the largest democracy in the world. Elections are the foundation-stone of any democracy. Further, regular elections are the lifeline of any democracy. The exercise of the right to vote is an important duty of a citizen. The voting behaviour is a part of their political behaviour, which can be studied and analysed at the time of elections. The voting behaviour of the people have been studied both at macro and micro levels. Some scholars took up studies on the voting behaviour at the constituency level – both Parliamentary (Lok Sabha) constituency and constituency for the State Legislative Assembly. These studies help in formulating theoretical framework pertaining to research on electoral politics and voting behaviour of the people at various levels.

Uday Shankar Vidyarthi
18/4/24

Significance of the Study of Voting Behaviour

It has been observed that voting behaviour is a way different people tend to vote. The voting behaviour in any political system identifies the nature of political culture underlying the system. It is an indicator of the contemporary political ethos prevalent in the country. The process of election is a key mechanism of consensus-building and a means of institutionalising conflict among different groups as well. This has many distinctive features and is carried on within a distinctive social and political environment in the country.

The study of voting behaviour constitutes a very important empirical investigation into the nature of political participation, political behaviour patterns, motivational factors and other sociological aspects which go into the electoral process. Palmer has also observed that "Elections are particularly conspicuous and revealing aspects of most contemporary political systems. They highlight and dramatise a political system bringing its nature into sharp relief and providing insights into other aspects of the system and the basic nature and actual functioning of the system as a whole. During an election, a political system is on display". The complex role of elections in the political system is underlined by an examination of the voting behaviour of the electorate.

Review of Literature

The study of voting behaviour was started in the West, especially in the United States during 1940s and 1950s. It had gradually become an important component of the Social Science Research in the Third World.

Frederick George Bailey, a social anthropologist has made an in depth study on the relationship between parliamentary democracy in Odisha and the older traditional forms of social and political organisation. He employed the techniques and the conceptual framework of social anthropology to study and

Uday Shankar Vidyarthi
18/4/24

analyse the complex and diversified society. He studied the two villages Bisipara and Mohanpur with special reference to the size of the vote banks, the strategy of campaigning, role of caste allocations, the role of Political Parties. He undertook research by interviewing politicians and other leading men. He interviewed fifty MLAs of the Odisha Legislative Assembly. The interview provided biographical material about the members, their education, wealth, caste, occupation outside Parties and the like. He also studied and analysed the election reports to gain some insight into theworking of electoral machines. His published work entitled *Politics andSocial Change in Odisha in 1959* was one of the pioneering works pertaining to the politics in Odisha between 1947 and 1959.

An empirical study was conducted by three Post-Graduate Departments, namely, Political Science, Labour and Social Welfare and History of Berhampur University on the Mid-term Polls of 1971 elections. This was jointly funded by the Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi and Berhampur University. The findings of the study on "Mid- Term Polls of 1971: A Study on Chatrapur Parliamentary Constituency" was published by Berhampur University. This Project Report contained the interdisciplinary study and analysis on the five Assembly segments under Chatrapur Parliamentary Constituency, viz., Berhampur, Chikiti, Dura (SC), Khallikote and Mohana. In the study on the Khallikote Assembly segment *inter alia* it was found that in the 1971 Mid-term Poll to the State Legislative Assembly, Casteism, Communalism and other parochial forces did not appear to be strong in the area. It was also found that traditionalism by itself was not a decisive factor in an election. It had to be supplemented by other factors like personality, campaigning and ideology.

V.M. Sirsikar has studied the factors other than rationality influencing the process of elections in the Indian context.

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)-sponsored Indian Election Data Project began in early 1968 with an objective of undertaking a series of computer-based studies of elections since 1952 in more than 3,000 State

Uday Shankar Vidyarthi
18/4/24

Assembly Constituencies in India. A major objective of these studies was the way in which national electoral trends intersect with regional variations, and the way in which specific categories of local constituencies are influenced by the State they are located. The "Studies on Electoral Politics in the Indian States" have been published in four volumes under the Editorship of Myron Weiner and John Osgood Field. These were published in 1975. The findings of these studies have been a source of motivation for further research on the dynamics of the electoral behaviour of the people in different Indian States. Many Political Scientists have chosen to use legislative constituencies as the unit of analysis. It may be noted here that Constituencies are smaller and more numerous and therefore it is easier to collect and compute electoral data. Further, the Scheduled Castes have reserved constituencies, but no constituency is predominantly inhabited by the Scheduled Castes.

Iqbal Narain made a pioneering work on the nature and dynamics of election studies in India.

Shriram Maheswari has made a study with special reference to the voting behaviour manifested in 1977 elections to the Delhi Metropolitan Council based on survey method of research.

Rajalakshmi Mishra had made a study on the three bye-elections to the Bihar Legislative Assembly held on 24th April 1985. These Constituencies were: Khurda and Kakatpur of Puri district and Keonjhar (Reserved) Constituency of Keonjhar district. In this study she highlighted the nomination politics, electioneering, campaign techniques, propaganda themes and the electoral verdict. She identified the factors responsible for the defeat of the ruling Congress (I) in all the three bye-elections and the victory of the anti-Congress forces.

A.K. Paricha in his article "Election Politics and Voting Behaviour of Bihar" has examined the various factors influencing the voting behaviour of the

Uday Shankar Vidyarthi
18/4/24

people of Bihar in the elections between 1951-52 and 1984.

Under the joint leadership of B.B. Jena and J.K. Baral studies of voting behaviour were made with special reference to the elections to the State Legislative Assembly, 1977. The findings of these studies were very interesting and academically rewarding for undertaking further research in this area. These studies brought to highlight the various factors influencing the voting behaviour of the voters of the 10 Assembly Constituencies in Bhagalpur District. The urban-rural dichotomy, the feudal factor, personality factor, linguistic factor and the voting behaviour of the Tribals and the Scheduled Castes have been focussed in these studies.

Manas Chakrabarty *et al.* in their paper on West Bengal State Assembly Election, 2011 have analysed the verdict of the people of State in bringing an end to the 34 years of uninterrupted rule of the Left front and the massive victory of the TMC. They have characterised the victory a historic and it was rightly called a political tsunami. The slogan of Mamata Banerjeee '*Ma, Mati* and *Manus'*, acted as a magic in the 2011 elections to the West Bengal State Legislative Assembly.

Kumar Sanjay and Roy Praveen, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2013,In his major work, "Measurement of voting behavior and its practical status in India" a detailed analysis of the factors affecting the voting behaviour of people has been done.

Palshikar Suhas, Kumar Sanjay, Lodha Sanjay in "Electoral Politics in India: Resurgence of Bharatiya Janata Party" Taylor & Francis Publication, New Delhi, 2017 gave a detailed analysis of the voting behavior in the context of the wave in favour of BJP and the unexpected defeat of Congress Party in the 16th Lok Sabha elections of 2014.

Uday Shankar Vidyarthi
18/4/24

Narayan Iqbal in "Rural elites and Elections in an Indian states 1978" has given a detailed description of the role of leaders in Panchayati Raj of Rajasthan and their special influence on the rural intelligentsia and election campaign.

Kothari Rajni, in "Party system and election studies in Bombay 1967" made a detailed study of the 1967 elections and put the electoral process in the context of changing constituencies in India.

Jain, Sumit Kumar in "Caste and politics in Bihar 1989" Similarly , studied the impact of caste politics on elections in Bihar.

Scope and Objectives of the Study

In this study, an attempt will be made to study the voting behaviour of the people of Sultanganj Assembly Constituency in Bhagalpur District, Bihar. This was a general Constituency from 1951-52 elections to the 1980 elections to the State Legislative Assembly. In 1980 and 2010 elections tothe State Legislative Assembly it was reserved for the Scheduled Castes. The voters and the political aspirants of this Assembly Constituency form the focus of this study.

The objectives of the study are to:

- Study and analyse the voting preference and party identification of the voters.
- To examine the factors that influences the voting behaviour of the people of this Assembly Constituency.
- To enquire into changes in the voting behaviour of the people during different elections.
- To examine the impact of voting behaviour on electoral politics.

Research Questions

- Does leadership play a decisive role in election outcome ?
- Does gender play a major role in determining voting behaviour?

Uday Shankar Vidyarthi
18/4/24

- Is the effect of other important factors like caste, religion and ideology minimal in politics?
- Did developmental politics left behind identity politics?
- Does voting behaviour affect Electoral Politics ?

Hypotheses

- **The voting pattern of Sultanganj Assembly Constituency is determined by its socio-economic-political perspective.**
- **The voters of Assembly Constituency have voted in accordance with the voting pattern both at the State and District levels in majority of elections that were held in recent years to the State Legislative Assembly.**
- **Performance of the governments on different issues affected electoral behaviour of the voters.**
- **Party attachment is one of the important factors among the voters in the Sultanganj Assembly Constituency.**

- **Methodology**

The statistical data pertaining to various elections to the State Legislative Assembly will be collected from different offices connected with the conduct of elections. The official publications of the Election Commission of India, New Delhi and the Home (Election) Department, Government of Bihar, Patna will be found very useful with regard to the size of the electorate, the nomination process and the number of candidates finally contesting the elections, percentage of voters exercising their right to vote, the number of valid votes polled, the number of votes rejected, the statistics pertaining to the recently used NOTA option, postal votes, etc.

The Secretariat of the Bihar Legislative Assembly will be publishing, at

Uday Shankar Vidyarthi
18/04/24

periodical intervals, detail of the members of the State Legislature to make the representatives known to a wider circle inside the State and outside. The biographical sketches will be prepared by the Secretariat of the State Legislative Assembly on the basis of the information received from the members themselves. The Detail information of the elected representatives covering their personal details, viz., educational qualifications, marital status, date of birth, important positions held in the past, party affiliation, number of children, hobbies, special interests, socio-cultural activities, profession, tours and travels. These publications will be fully utilised to prepare the profile of the elected representatives from the Assembly Constituency.

Books, Journals, Government Reports, Newspapers and other materials relevant to the study will be referred to as secondary sources.

The data of the present study will be collected through informal interview with the candidates who have contested in the elections held to the State Legislative Assembly in 2015 and 2020 from Constituency as the nominees of various Political Parties as well as Independent candidate. For the purpose of the study and analysis of this work, historical, descriptive and analytical methods will be followed.

Chapter Plan

This work will be spread over **Six** chapters.

Chapter-I Introduction.

Chapter-II Dynamics of Politics in Bihar.

Chapter-III Profile of Bhagalpur District and Sultanganj Assembly Constituency.

Chapter-IV Dimensions of Electoral Politics.

Chapter-V Dynamics of Voting Behaviour.

Chapter VI Conclusion and Suggestion.

Uday Shankar Vidyarthi
18/4/22

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